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Anglican and Global Relations

COMPANION DIOCESE HANDBOOK

+ INTRODUCTION +

THE COMPANION DIOCESE RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM

Partnership in Mission is at the heart of all relationships, both within the Anglican Communion and throughout the wider church. The Companion Diocese Relationship Program offers domestic dioceses in the United States opportunities to engage in mission activity with dioceses beyond the United States, as part of the *Partners In Mission* process throughout the Anglican Communion. CD Relationships exist to strengthen each participant in ministry and mission. Ideally, such relationships will involve the partners in increased awareness of the single mission to which each is called. That mission includes:

mutual encouragement and prayer for one-another

intensified knowledge of and concern for one-another

the exchange of resources, both spiritual and material

The Companion Diocese Program is a disciplined way, agreed upon and shared in by the companions, to know from first-hand experience what it means to live interdependently. It recognizes that the responsibility for mission in any one place belongs to the church in that place, and that each part of the worldwide church also carries responsibility for mission in every other place.

Companion Diocese Relationships are formally recognized by the national Executive Council at the request of the Episcopal Church dioceses involved, on the basis of the resolution by both partners to enter a CD Relationship. The initial period can be as long as five years, with mutually agreed upon periods of extension.

This *Companion Diocese Handbook* provides material based upon guidelines developed by the Anglican Consultative Council and adopted by the General Convention in 1991. It also draws upon the experiences of Companion Dioceses throughout the Anglican Communion.

PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION and MISSION IN PARTNERSHIP

Theology of Mission

In our time, God is teaching us that all churches, be they in the North, South, East or West, are "sent" to make known the *Good News* to those in their own place and in all places. All churches exist in circumstances where God is sending them as ambassadors to proclaim the Gospel.

In Christ, God calls us and enables us to abide in his life. In Christ, God sends us and enables us to proclaim and demonstrate the truth about God, the truth about ourselves, and the truth about how we come to know and to love God and one- another.

The mission of the church involves SPEAKING, BEING, and DOING. If the church only speaks of God but does not live a common life that shows forth the nature of God's life, her words will seem empty. If the church cares only for her own members and shows no compassion for human suffering and no outrage at human injustice, the love she proclaims and displays will appear shallow or selfish. If the church only does good works and seeks justice, she will fail to speak of God and so fail to make known the one in whose Name she is sent.

The mission of the church is always God's mission: To restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. A divided church obscures - even hides - the nature and will of God. In being sent in God's Name, we are called by God to be one. Our unity is rooted in divine life and its realization derives from our unity in Christ given at baptism.

Since mission as a movement toward the world is the outcome of our union with Christ, ecumenism must be seen as a vehicle for fulfilling that mission, and we need to extend our engagement with one another, and thus grow in Christian unity.

In drawing us into the Father, Christ makes us who were once strangers, both friends with him and with one-another. As friends, we share a common mission and a common life. We help one-another in our tasks and with our resources. Hence the missiological importance of *partnership*.

Partnership in Mission

Partnership in Mission puts into effect "mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ". It enables local churches to analyze their own situation, develop their own priorities and decide their own strategies of implementation, in consultation with their partners worldwide, who bring valuable resources and different insights into ministry and mission from their own cultures, nations and economic situations.

Partnership in Mission has to do with people. In drawing us to the Father, Christ makes us who were strangers, friends both with him and with one-another. As friends, we share a common mission and a common life, helping each other and sharing resources. Companion Diocese Relationships are people-oriented, with emphasis on Relationships. and they exist for face-to-face mutual support and the strengthening of mission in each companion's own church.

Mission in Partnership

Mission in Partnership involves the mutual sharing of God's gifts to the church, whether spiritual, intellectual, gifts of wisdom and skill, experience, vitality, educational amenities, institutional or human energy.

Mission in Partnership calls for discussion of goals and problems in a process which enables the local church to tackle the real and sometimes painful issues, drawing upon the spiritual, theological, personal and material resources of the church as a whole.

Putting Mission in Partnership into effect calls for openness between different churches about what each has, gives and receives. As in any human relationship, such openness is only achieved by persistent disclosing and patient probing, gradually building trust.

PURPOSE OF A COMPANION RELATIONSHIP

* To help strengthen the Anglican Communion through the direct experience of interdependence across cultural and geographical boundaries within the Body of Christ; and
* To strengthen one-another for mission by building a relationship in which each partner is both giver and receiver.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH OFFICE

Prior to taking any action, it is recommended that the Partnership Services Officer at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City be contacted. Staff at the Church Center's Anglican and Global Relations Office maintain information about dioceses seeking CD Relationships, and they also have more detailed information about the respective provinces and regions in the Anglican Communion.

The name of a Companion Diocese Consultant for your domestic province is also available through the Partnership Services Officer. The CD Consultant can meet with the committee that is exploring the possibility of a Companion Relationship. (Expenses related to the use of the consultant are covered by specific agreement between the diocese/committee, the consultant and the Episcopal Church Center.)

Such visits would include discussion of mutual hopes for the relationship, organization and timing, and financial planning.

Anglican and Global Relations

+ GUIDELINES +

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP

General Goals

I. TO HELP STRENGTHEN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

A. To develop the identity of each partner, together with the potential for each one to carry out its mission in the context of its community.
B. To promote greater cooperation between each partner's members and apply mission in partnership at all levels of the church's life.
C. To help partner dioceses under a variety of constraints, building confidence through the experience of knowing that partners can and do lend support.

II. TO STRENGTHEN ONE-ANOTHER

A. To reflect on mission strategy together.
B. To clarify goals and priorities in the planning of each partner's programs, based upon the perceived mission of the church in each place, and the willingness to redefine that mission in light of the partnership experience.
C. To establish a new pattern of relationship between partners, born of their respective strengths and weaknesses, so that resources can be used and shared more creatively in the mission of the church.
D. To encourage openness so that full disclosure of information and resources can be made with each other.

Preliminary Requirements

I. THE BISHOP'S TOTAL COMMITMENT

II. A DIOCESE-WIDE COMMITMENT

It is essential that the Companion Diocese Relationship involve the whole diocese and that it has the full support of the bishop. The diocesan convention should have the opportunity to discuss and approve proposals before they are implemented.

III. GOOD PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT

IV. HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Mission is person-to-person. It requires good interchange and adequate funding.

V. BE PREPARED FOR:

* Different ways of doing things.
* Different attitudes about what is and is not important.
* Different concepts and approaches to:
  - Time
  - Ministry
  - Organization
  - Communications
  - Stewardship
  - Issues
  - Responsibilities of the Church
* Different language and language dialects.

The Companion Exploration Committee

An exploration committee should be established to search for and negotiate the formation of a Companion Diocese Relationship. Such a committee may even be formed to respond to a partner beyond the USA seeking to form a CD Relationship with a domestic diocese. This committee needs to be carefully chosen to represent a good cross-section of the diocese, including:

* The bishop (but not necessarily as chair).
* Persons involved in or exposed to mission life beyond the diocese.
* Persons who have travelled.

* Persons from major program areas within the diocese:

World Mission
Social Ministries
Episcopal Church Women/United Thank Offering
Communications
Youth
Congregational Development
Education and Training
Financial Development

* Liaison with the domestic province.

The person who chairs the committee needs to be:

* One who understands and is committed to *Partners In Mission.*
* One who has leadership abilities.
* One who has time to coordinate (communicate).
* One who is available to visit the partner.

Questions to Ask Before Identifying a Partner

I. What is OUR mission? What are our mission goals?

II. What are our mission needs that can come from a CD Relationship?

III. How willing - and able - are we to RECEIVE what our partner can give?

IV. What do we have to give?

Establish a Timetable

A time line from which items may be added or deleted, should be established, detailing the preliminary work to be done before the official formation of the CD Relationship.

I. Which convention will require action?

II. When should goals and expectations be identified?

III. When should the companion be identified?

IV. When should a preliminary exchange occur?

V. When (approximately) will the formal relationship begin?

Other timetable considerations:

* Periodic reports to diocesan council.
* Diocesan schedule for developing budget.
* ALLOW TIME FOR COMMUNICATION TO OCCUR.
* Establish a diocesan communications schedule (for promotion, including diocesan newspaper deadlines).

Budget Planning

The Companion Diocese Relationship requires adequate financial resources from the domestic side, although it should be emphasized that THE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD NEITHER BEGIN WITH A FUNDING PROJECT NOR DEVELOP INTO A PROJECT-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIP.

I. EXPLORATORY BUDGET

Financial provisions need to be made for:

A. Committee meetings
B. Promotion and education materials
(e.g., presentation to diocesan convention or diocesan council)
C. Visit <u>to</u> the potential partner - visit <u>by</u> the potential partner
D. Correspondence and other communication
E. Contingencies

II. RELATIONSHIP'S OPERATING BUDGET

A. Committee expense (mailing, minutes, etc.)
B. Exchange visits (travel costs for USA travellers and possibly underwriting travel for the partner)
C. Educational materials

D. Promotional material (slide, video, etc.)
E. Communications with the partner

III. SMALL PROJECTS BUDGET (MAY REQUIRE EXTRA FUND-RAISING)

* Gift exchanges (small basic materials)
* Group visit (e.g., youth)

IV. CAPITAL VENTURE (SPECIAL FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN)

If in the process of a Companion Diocese Relationship, funding projects are developed, the partners may, in consultation with their own national or provincial (Anglican Church Province) bodies, decide together on the validity of any proposed project. Priorities established at *Partners In Mission* Consultations are to be respected.

Developing the Relationship

I. SELECTION

It is essential that the prospective partner be given the opportunity to learn what is being proposed, to identify its own expectations, and to decide freely whether to enter into a relationship. If at all possible, there needs to be a preliminary meeting with representatives of the prospective partner diocese.

It is recommended that the initial period of the relationship be five years, with the option of continuing for two-or three-year periods, if such an extension is mutually agreed upon. Friendships formed during a CD Relationship know no time limits.

Communication between the partners is the most critical element of the relationship. Before the formal relationship is initiated, a system of communication needs to be agreed upon, including someone whose specific responsibility is to take charge of the communication process.

It is probably wise for the initial exchange to be between the two bishops (without limiting it to bishop-to-bishop exchanges). If it is a province-to-province relationship, such exchange would be from the USA provincial president to the head (archbishop) of the respective Anglican Province.

The Companion Diocese Relationship is established upon passage of resolutions by both partners' governing bodies. Such resolutions should be sent to the Partnership Services Officer who will prepare appropriate resolutions for the national Executive Council to acknowledge and give formal recognition to the companionship.

II. BEGINNING THE RELATIONSHIP

It would be prudent to draft an informal covenant between the partners outlining:

Mutual expectations

Time frame

Mutually agreed upon activities

Financial relationship

An evaluation process at the end of the initial time period

It must be noted that a covenant is a purely "western" mechanism, and the process may be quite different culturally from that of the partner.

Both the beginning and ending of a CD Relationship should be marked liturgically.

III. AREAS OF SHARING

A. Information

Many resources are available to learn about your partner and to allow your partner to learn about you:

1. *Partners In Mission* Consultation Reports on file in the Anglican and Global Relations Office at the Episcopal Church Center.
2. At the Public Library, look for books and periodicals on the history and culture of your partner's country and geographic region.
3. Newspapers from you partner's country.
4. Embassy, Consulate or Mission to the United Nations.
5. Americans who travelled to your partner's country, and people from that region who live in the USA.
6. Newsletters from missionaries serving in the USA or in the partner's diocese; diocesan papers, profiles and other materials that can be shared.

B. Language

Where English is not the national language or not widely spoken, it might be wise to have all correspondence translated into the national language. It could be beneficial for people in your diocese to learn common phrases and some parts of the Prayer Book and Hymnal in your companion's language.

Learning something of another language is immensely enriching. To know the Lord's Prayer, a grace, or even the Creeds can highlight the reality that within the Body of Christ, Jesus is praised in many tongues.

C. Prayer

A common prayer and a prayer cycle are important aids for each companion to acknowledge partnership with God and mission in one-another. Special intentions can also be highlighted. When clergy lists are prepared for your diocese, include your partner's families.

D. Exchange Visits

1. Domestic Diocese to Partner Diocese

After establishing the relationship, each partner will probably want to plan exchange visits. See if anyone in the diocese will be travelling on business or for other reasons to your partner's country. Such individuals could be contacted on behalf of the Companion Committee and asked to meet with local church leadership and civil authorities. Upon their return, they could be asked to write and/or speak about their experiences.

In preparing for official visits, the following should be considered:

a. Think through the visit. What are the expectations? What should be seen or learned? What does the host church wish to include? What amount of time will be required to meet the host's priorities?

b. Mutually acceptable dates for the visit should be determined. Climatic conditions should be considered to determine the best time for all concerned. Discuss the size of the visiting group with your host.

c. With the companion, work out a schedule for the visit. Build in rest periods. USA representatives should be aware that local transportation is often

very expensive for the host church, and be prepared to assist with local travel costs. Whatever the level of hospitality offered, it should to be graciously accepted by the visitors.

d. The appropriate embassy or consulate of the host (and other countries to be visited) should be contacted for visas, health shots, the availability of medical care, and any regulations or local customs, such as rules or restrictions on taking photographs.

e. To prepare for reciprocal visits, the USA visitors might include time on their agenda to discuss plans for future visits with their companions.

f. General plans need to be made in advance of a visit on how the delegation will share its experiences and impressions when it comes home.

2. Partner Diocese to a USA Diocese

When preparing the USA diocese to host the partner, it is vital that serious consideration be give to these questions:

a. What are their hopes and desires? (as well as ours)?

b. What do they want to learn and see? What do we want them to see of us?

c. What are each partner's expectations?

d. How do we prepare ourselves, attitudinally and behaviorally, to be looked at, learned from, and listened to?

Do not arrange the schedule so tightly that the visitors spend all their time speaking, preaching and working. Plan time for rest and relaxation.

Provision should be made for conversation in small groups with diocesan leaders, to discuss the implications of *Partners In Mission*. Part of the responsibility in hosting people from another country is to create an environment in which they feel so at ease that sharing will take place comfortably.

Where possible, arrange the schedule so that guests experience not only the life of the local church, but also have an opportunity to experience the social and cultural life in which the church exists, thereby gaining a full picture of the world context in which the mission and ministry of the host church are exercised.

IV. DIOCESAN INVOLVEMENT

A Companion Diocese Relationship requires the involvement of people beyond the bishops and the group interested in world mission. It should be worked into the life of each diocesan body. An important priority of the relationship needs to be the active participation of people, so that the relationship forms a pattern of life in each congregation.

A. Parish to Parish Relationship

The most direct involvement in a CD Relationship is by the people in a domestic congregation communicating with the people in a congregation of the partner (or with an institution in the companion's diocese). Such relationships often take the form of letter-writing exchanges and occasional personal visits as the result of business or other travel.

It is not intended that this relationship be based upon financial support of one congregation for the other, nor should it interfere with the partner church's mission and fiscal priorities. It is intended to provide needed support and cultural understanding, together with spiritual support for each other's needs.

B. Education

1. Special diocesan church school materials can be integrated into the regular curriculum. These might include:
   a. The way in which similar age groups live, study and worship;
   b. The nature of the family, the culture and the hopes of young people;
   c. The experiences of their faith in their daily lives;
   d. The questions and issues that concern them most.

Questions should be raised about how young people can enter into real partnership with each other in the Body of Christ, as well as how they can strengthen one-another for mission and ministry. Without the emphasis on partnership, understanding and respect for people of different cultures will deteriorate into meaningless curiosity.

2. Special diocesan adult study material could draw on the resources of *Partners In Mission* Consultations, and assistance may be sought from the Anglican

and Global Relations Office staff. Curricula could focus on the comparative study of respective cultures, social and economic conditions, and the issues facing each church.

C. Communication

1. Diocesan newspapers and parish newsletters are good channels of information, not only in drawing together what is occurring within the relationship, but in publicizing special activities. Feature stories (with photographs) about people can provide a clearer picture of life and mission for each partner.

2. Audio and video tapes could be exchanged (be certain that the partner has the equipment and capacity to develop and use electronic reproductions), including liturgies, music, and material for discussion groups.

3. Art communicates a great deal. Is art from your companion's culture available in you diocese? Are there artists in both dioceses who could share some of their work for a display or be commissioned to design vestments or other art objects?

4. Invite local speakers who have knowledge or insight about your partner's country and culture, or about issues that affect the church there. The Anglican and Global Relations Office can be contacted for names of former Appointed Missionaries, Volunteers for Mission, or students studying in your diocese.

V. ECUMENICAL ELEMENTS

The growing partnership within the Anglican Communion should also serve the wider cause of Christian unity. Whenever possible, ecumenical activities need to be considered from the beginning of the CD Relationship.

Local ecumenical participants are most appropriately involved where each companion receives visitors from its partner diocese. Planning could include consideration of ecumenical representatives on the visiting teams.

Ecumenical and inter-faith groups working together on social, economic and other peace and justice issues are themselves valid partners in the companionship process.

Evaluating the Relationship

Companion Diocese Relationships are a dynamic force for mission that require regular theological and missiological evaluation. It is recommended that at an agreed upon time, prior to the completion of the first companion period, a culturally sensitive evaluation be undertaken, during which the future of the formal relationship can be determined. Among the areas to be explored in the evaluation are:

1. How has each companion been enriched through the relationship?
2. What changes in its mission and ministry have occurred because of the relation ship?
3. How have our expectations been met?
4. What problems have arisen?
5. What remains to be done?

Renewing the Relationship

Companionships are renewed by the mutual agreement of each partner. The normal extension period is three years, and the relationship may be renewed as many times as both partners consider mutually beneficial. The evaluation process towards the completion of each period should help determine whether the relationship should be extended or concluded.

Formal recognition of the extension is obtained in the same manner as the establishment of the CD Relationship, by notifying the Partnership Services Officer at the Episcopal Church Center. The request for an extension will be forwarded to the national Executive Council for affirmation.

Concluding the Relationship

It is generally advisable for those entering a CD Relationship to establish a termination date to the outset. (If circumstances make extension beyond that date mutually beneficial, a new termination date can be established subsequently.) This clarifies issues and

avoids difficulties. Also, when the partners have finalized the termination, this information should be shared with the Partnership Services Officer so that records of existing relationships may be kept current.

Just as the CD Relationship began with a liturgical observance, its conclusion should also be marked in a liturgical way. This would bring closure to the formal companionship. And always remember that *friendships* formed during a CD Relationship know no time limits and will never be lost.

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